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Outside of
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By ✓

DOUGLAS C. McMURTRIE

*Director of Typography, Ludlow Typograph Company
Chicago, Illinois*

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THE ACTIVITIES of the printing press in the early days of Salt Lake City have received a certain amount of attention from general historians and from students of journalistic and typographic history. But our knowledge of pioneer printing in Utah communities outside of Salt Lake City is regrettably scant and unsatisfactory. The present resume of the record of the Utah country press in its beginnings is here set forth in the hope that its publication will elicit from authorities on local history some information that will add to the little we know about the pioneer printers.

Except for the printing done at Fillmore when the official press of the *Deseret News* was driven to that point during the military disturbances of 1858, the first appearance outside of Salt Lake City of a regularly established Utah printing plant was in 1863. On May 22 of that year, Joseph E. Johnson, a Mormon who had come to Utah from Nebraska in 1861, brought out at Spring Lake Villa the first issue of a semi-monthly agricultural periodical called *The Farmer's Oracle*.²

*Reprinted, with some revisions, from the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, v. 5, no. 3, July, 1932, p. 83-87.

¹According to one authority, the *Deseret News* plant was divided between Fillmore and Parowan, and the paper appeared now in one place and now in the other (Charles W. Penrose, "The Deseret News, the Pioneer Newspaper of the West," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, July, 1912, p. 141). But the files of the *News* for 1858 show no issues dated at Parowan.

²A copy of this first issue was acquired in 1932 by the Church Historian's Office, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City. Two pages of this issue are reproduced herewith. The type page of the original measures 8½ by 11½ inches.

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Spring Lake Villa was a small settlement in Utah County between Payson and Santaquin, some fifty or sixty miles south of Salt Lake City. Its few inhabitants abandoned the place later in the sixties because of trouble with the Indians.

The ninth issue of the *Oracle*, a copy of which is preserved in the Bancroft Library of the University of California, was dated September 22, 1863, and contains an apology for "having missed the date of one number" because of the fact that "circumstances over which we had no control have denied us paper, and even the lean supply at present is of indifferent quality." The quality of the paper was indeed "indifferent," and the printing on it muddy and inferior.

The *Oracle* consisted of eight small pages to an issue, three columns to the page. J. E. Johnson was the editor and publisher, and W. D. Johnson was named as proprietor, and it was "published the first and third Tuesday in each month." In Nebraska, Editor Johnson had been concerned with several publishing enterprises.³ In Utah he did not confine himself to his paper as a means of livelihood. Advertisements in the pages of the *Oracle* disclose the fact that he had for sale "A few choice pot-plants, including Verbenas, Geraniums, Ice-plants, Pansies, Antirrhinum, etc., also choice Carnations, Hadwigii, China grass and other Pink roots in autumn," as well as "Fruit and other Utah novelties," among them "Deseret current, *Gilia longiflora* (Scarlet), scarlet penstamon, Thousand-flowered Cone Cactus, a beautiful white variegated lily, and a few other desirable and beautiful sorts." The

³In 1852, he had bought the *Bugle*, at Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa, and from that office issued the *Omaha Arrow*, printed in Iowa, but intended for circulation in the Nebraska settlement. In 1860 he was publishing the *Huntsman's Echo* at Wood River Center, Nebraska.

subscription price of the *Oracle* was two dollars a year and its advertising space sold for ten cents a line, but "Hymenial and Obituary Notices, and Reports of Agricultural, Manufacturing and Literary Societies, and Fairs" were published without charge.

The *Oracle* lasted about two years; probably it ended with the abandonment of the settlement at Spring Lake Villa. Later, Johnson had moved to Saint George, in the extreme southwestern corner of Utah. On January 22, 1868, he there began the publication of a weekly which he called at first *Our Dixie Times*.⁴ The following May, the name was changed to *Rio Virgen Times*. This paper is said to have continued for about one year.

After the *Farmer's Oracle* at Spring Lake Villa, the next undertaking of the press in Utah outside of Salt Lake City was the *Union Vedette*, published at Camp Douglas, a military post immediately adjacent to Salt Lake City, "by officers and enlisted men, for the California & Nevada Territorial Volunteers." This began on November 20, 1863, as a four-page four-column weekly. On January 5, 1864, the publishers, who remained anonymous, added the *Daily Vedette*, the first daily in Utah. The intention at first was to continue both the daily and the weekly editions, but as the subscribers showed a decided preference for the daily, with its telegraphic news, the weekly was discontinued with the issue of January 14, 1864. Beginning January 27th, the daily was enlarged to the size of the former weekly and took the name *Daily Union Vedette*.

In July, 1865, Great Salt Lake City was substituted for Camp Douglas in the date line of the *Vedette*, and the page was again enlarged, to 14 by 20½ inches, six columns.

⁴The Latter-Day Saints Library at Salt Lake City has Vol. 1, No. 6, February 26, 1868.

The Farmer's Oracle.

The hand of Industry makes the Desert to bud, bloom and bear fruit, and rears the proudest structures of Earth.

No. 1. SPRING LAKE VILLA, UTAH COUNTY, UTAH, FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1863. Vol. 1:

Chicory.

Chicory, succory, or wild endive, is not indigenous to any part of the United States, but was introduced here from England, about 1812. They it is found wild, as it also is in many portions of the continent. Its culture in England was begun by Arthur Young in 1788, though in Belgium and France it had long been grown as a forage plant. For the purpose of forage, it is sown the same as clover, and at the rate of from eight to thirteen pounds per acre. Mr. Young considered it very valuable, especially for those farmers keeping a large stock of swine. He also recommended it for soiling, and for fattening cattle. It is a perennial plant, lasting from four to six years, and even longer. Indeed, it is stated that the plant is growing in Western New York, where sown in 1814. By many it is objected to as a field crop, on account of the difficulty with which it is eradicated.

Chicory closely resembles the dandelion, and, like that plant, contains a milky juice. The flowers are a very pretty blue. In early spring it makes a fine salad, and is sown for that purpose in the vicinity of most of our Eastern cities. The roots of the plant have for many years been used to mix with coffee and as a substitute for it. The present high price of coffee has called attention to the culture of chicory, and it is being sown to take its place in all parts of the North. The seed can generally be obtained at most seed stores. To grow it for this purpose, prepare a bed the same as for carrots; sow it about as thickly and thin out and cultivate the same.

Its preparation for a beverage is very simple. Gather the roots late in the fall and place them in sand in the cellar. Remove a few of them as wanted, wash them, cut in slices and dry and roast them in the coffee-roaster till they become brown; grind the same as coffee. Make it the same as a cup of coffee. A writer in a late number of the *Ohio Farmer* gives the following as the method of preparation in vogue among the Germans in his vicinity:—"Roast it the same as coffee, and when nearly done, add a small tea-cupful of common molasses to a quart of the browned root, and continue stirring it a while and it will soon be ready for use. Mix with this browned chicory and molasses one-fifth as much roasted coffee, then go on with your coffee-making as usual; and those who have the tact to make a good cup of coffee will have it."

There is a difference of opinion in regard to the healthfulness of the chicory as a beverage. Many of the old English physicians approved of its dietic properties. It undoubtedly excites the nerves, and its immoderate use, like that of pure coffee, is without doubt injurious.—[Prairie Farmer.]

Vertigo, or Giddiness in Sheep.

M. Reynal considers vertigo a disease of the nervous system, occasioned by a worm—the *canaries canbralis*—located in the brain. Lambs, from the age of two months, or from four to twelve months, become the subjects of it; and but rarely ever after the age of eighteen months. The disease is apt to end in atrophy—wasting of the brain and spinal marrow. In the rank of principal causes he places, first, Heredity; second, Intercourse between the sexes too prematurely, especially the employment of rams for tupping, not more than six or eight months old, as is the practice in some parts of the country.

To guard against the disease, put out of the breeding-fold both males and females that have shown any signs of the disorder, and not breed from the ewe under the age of thirty months, nor from rams until they have attained to their second year. And if there be any hind in conclusions from the influence of a first foundation or necessary ones, were ought to put away from the flock females who, though in apparent health themselves, have ever produced diseased stock.—[Translation from the French, by W. Percival.]

Sugar from Box Elder.

A correspondent of the *Prairie Farmer* says:—

"I have been trying it, and am better satisfied with the quality of the product than with that of Sugarbe, although it produces a much less quantity. Although, from a little sourness of sap before boiling, it did not grain in the kettle, it has since grained nicely, and the color and flavor are satisfactory, and not dissimilar to the common Sugar or Rock Maple. The sweetness of the sap is also about the same. The Box Elder is a handsome and very fast growing tree, exceeded only with me by the locust, cottonwood and white willow, and I incline to think equal to the two former of the three, in most situations. I would advise tree planters to plant for its two valuable characteristics, sugar

producing and quick growing, and if the former be no object, the latter certainly is."

How a Pear Tree was made to Fruit.

A correspondent of the *Wool Grower* says:—"I will tell you of an experiment I tried to make a pear tree bear. About 23 years ago I planted a small pear tree of the Virgalieu variety. It is now a very large and elegant tree. Every spring it would be covered with blossoms, and just after the fruit began to form, the stems would all fall off and cover the ground. In the autumn of 1861 I determined to try an experiment that would either kill or cure. The ground was dug away five or six feet around the trunk, and down to the roots. A small wagon load of clay was first put in and made into mortar, on the top of this I put a barrel of iron filings, and then over this a barrel of air-slacked lime, and the dirt was drawn back over the whole. Last year, 1862, the tree blossomed as usual, a few of the weakest stems fell off, but enough remained to load down the tree with abundance of luscious fruit."

Planting and Grafting Grapes.

A correspondent of the *Michigan Farmer* says:—"For the supply of the family self, the recommendation would be somewhat varied. There are but too many among us who plant a tree or a vine as they would a post; and, once planted, expect it to take care of itself. Such persons should confine themselves to the Hartford Prolific, Concord and Isabella; as those will best bear such treatment."

To graft upon the wild vine, the simplest and surest process is to remove the bark from the vine down to the roots; then cut the stem square off about two inches above the root, and split the stump with a pruning-knife or grafting chisel. Strip the cutting wedge-wise to fit, and insert it as in ordinary wedge-grafting. Dip a strip of cotton cloth in some warm grafting-wax and immediately wind it around the grafted parts. The earth should then be filled in and pressed around the vine. Recollect to match the bark of one with the other, as in top-grafting the apple or any other tree. Everybody should plant grapes.

If you would be tolerated, be tolerant. If you would hear the truth, tell it. If you would not be troubled, don't be troublesome.



Farmers' Oracle!

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J. E. JOHNSON, EDITOR & PUBLISHER.
W. D. JOHNSON, PROPRIETOR.

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All Correspondence must be addressed to the Editor, Spring Lake Villa.

Salutatory.

We are pleased once more to say to our friends, old and new, one and all: how d'ye do? Fat, or some well-meaning power, places us again upon the tripod, and so we submit, with this our best bow and a grand flourish of our feather. As we have chafed politics, we come now to the aid of a science more pleasant, profitable and successful, and hope our change will not worse our readers. Our interests now will be to raise potatoes instead of armies—to count cabbage instead of votes—to stick our "poll" for beans, instead of members of Congress—our "beets" will be of the scarlet sort—our "olus" of the gourd species—our "stump" meetings where our cabbage seed grows, and our "great gatherings" in autumn—from the garden.

Such is life—all change—
"Al, ma! what is there in Earth's various range,
Which time and abstract may not surely change."

It is our desire to be useful (as well as ornamental), and so if you like to try us once more, come on, and we will promise the best we have. We want to live with you here, and care our way among you, and this last we are determined to do. So here's our hand!

Our Paper.—The Prospect.

We wish to say to our patrons that we have commenced the publication of the *Oracle* under circumstances rather discouraging to the dollar-and-cent interest of the publisher, situated far away from markets where necessary material can only be obtained, and purchased at great expense, for cash only. Then we are sadly annoyed for want of an exchange that can be easily handled

and transported at small expense; their subject our little paper is an innovation upon our customs and habits, consequently many will argue that, as they have got along first-rate without such an institution, they can profitably continue without, and will spare discover their mistake until the progress of improvement has left them far behind.

We earnestly believe that our valiant and adjacent mountains contain the elements for our necessities, and material enough to make comfortable and even enrich its inhabitants; yet it takes science, skill, industry, perseverance and application to bring out the hidden wealth, and develop the many comforts. Few countries ever offered a wider field for the industrious, the energetic or scientific in the various details of home industry. The farmer, through his own and the experience of others, finds room for great improvement in the quantity of his crops with less than former labor. His stock may be improved and increased when an interchange of experience is adopted. The pomologist may learn where is to be obtained the best stock of fruits, and teach and learn the best modes of cultivation, propagation, &c. The mechanic falls into the advancing column, and produces, with less labor and expense, the necessities of life, and soon, by division of labor and union of means and strength, our artisans may stay imitations by supplying all our most important wants. With a limited research, discoveries have already been made of fine beds of stone coal, gypsum (plaster of Paris), salt, brimstone, saleratus, copperas, alum, nitre, borax, iron, lead, and some other valuable metals, as well as springs of coal oil, mineral or chalybeate waters of rare medicinal virtues; limestone, chalk and colored earths may also be enumerated.

Now with the farmer and stock-grower, producing a surplus of cereals, vegetables, fruits, wool and cotton, and the industry of the mechanic showing itself in rearing of better and more extended machinery: our chymist dissolving, purifying, melting and bringing to perfection our minerals, we only need the aid of science and the blessings of Heaven to lead us on with gigantic strides to an elevated and envious position among the sisterhood of States.

We feel a sort of inspiration to attempt assistance in this great cause that underlies our prosperity, and is the foundation of all social enjoyment, wealth and power.

Those who feel the importance of this subject should enlighten his neighbor, and awaken a thirst for intelligence and knowledge in every branch of domestic economy and industry, and whilst we strive to assist you, let us not faint for want of sustenance. Should life and health be spared, we expect that the *Oracle* will be published one year, whether well or poorly sustained.

What Fruits shall we grow?

The above subject gives a broad field for comment, and in the present number can only make a contracted prelude to a subject of such importance, but in future issues we purpose making this a prominent feature in the *Oracle*.

Fruit, in proper or extended variety, may constitute much of the material of human existence, and taking all the range of climate in our Territory, we may produce all of the most important varieties cultivated on this continent. Among the most staple of these are the early berries, such as strawberries, currants, gooseberries, raspberries and mulberries; the cherry, apricot, peach, plum, grape, apple, and pear. Of these and many other varieties, experience has proven to be not only quite hardy, but from the abundance of fruit and rich flavor, we find the soil and atmosphere congenial to their growth. Then we may answer the question where in rather a broad sense, and reply, grow every variety of fruit whose tree or shrub may be protected from the frosts of winter. This question settled, our next in order is the easiest, best and cheapest manner of producing the stocks, starting from the seed, and covering the whole interim of their growth. First the nursery, then the soil most proper time and mode of removing to, and care of, the orchard.

We hope our prominent fruit-growers will communicate the result of their experience in every branch of this subject, for we shall be glad to present the same to our readers. We shall, from time to time, detail our limited observations and experiments. We have introduced into this Territory quite a number of new varieties, and our experience in growing and propagating may be advantageous. We would say to nurserymen that now is the time to order seeds of every sort of fruit, evergreens and ornamental trees and shrubbery.

Setting aside the comfort and convenience of having an abundance of fruit in variety, there is now no crop grown that pays as well as fruit; and in a country

After it had become a Salt Lake City paper, the *Vedette* passed into civilian ownership with the issue of October 22, 1866, when P. L. Shoaff & Co. appeared as publishers. The recorded file ends in November, 1867.⁵

The establishment of a press at Saint George by Joseph E. Johnson in January, 1868, has already been mentioned. There is a record of a second paper started in that remote locality in the same year. It was the *Cactus*, published by Sangiovanni & Co. The only extant copy of this paper that I know of is Vol. 1, No. 2, September 19, 1868, in the library of the Masonic Grand Lodge at Salt Lake City. It is a little four-page affair, measuring barely 6 by 8 inches, and crudely printed.

The next Utah point, other than the capital, to have a press was probably Ogden, to which place the *Daily Telegraph* was removed from Salt Lake City in May, 1869. But the paper could not survive the change and was taken back to the capital the following August. Ogden was not long, however, without a paper of its own. On January 1, 1870, Franklin D. Richards started there the *Ogden Junction*, a semi-weekly. Richards withdrew from the enterprise soon after its inception and was succeeded by Charles W. Penrose. The paper was later renamed the *Ogden Herald*.⁶ The present-day *Standard-Examiner* at Ogden traces its descent from the *Junction* of 1870.

Provo seems to have received its first press with the establishment of the *Provo Daily Times* on August 1, 1873. This paper had many changes of name, appearing successively as the *Provo Tri-Weekly Times*, the *Utah County Times*, the *Utah County Advertiser*, and the *Territorial*

⁵Information concerning the *Vedette* is derived from the file in the Salt Lake City Public Library.

⁶From a manuscript account of Mormon journalism by Franklin D. Richards, in the Bancroft Library of the University of California. It contains a record of Mormon publications down to July, 1884.

Enquirer. Among its early editors were R. T. McEwen, R. G. Sleater, S. T. McEwen, and John C. Graham.⁷

Early in 1874, the *Beaver Enterprise*, established by Joseph Field, brought the press to Beaver City for the first time.⁸ This location thus became the fifth Utah printing point, outside of Salt Lake City, of which record has been found. Next was Silver Reef, a now extinct mining camp ten or fifteen miles northward from Saint George, where the *Silver Reef Echo* was established on February 24, 1877, by Joseph E. Johnson, of whom we last had record at Saint George. This paper was probably purchased by Crouch and Louder and renamed the *Miner*, which was successively edited by James N. Louder, Scipio A. Kenner, and Edward and John Pike.⁹

With these few notes, the available record of the Utah country press in the early days may be said to end. The record as it stands is admittedly faulty, and corrections and additions are much to be desired. Particularly desired is information about the old-time printers and editors. Also welcome would be notes of copies of old Utah country newspapers of the seventies and earlier. It is suggested that these notes should contain not only the dates of the papers, but also their volume and serial numbers and mention of the names of the publishers.

⁷Information from the Richards manuscript.

⁸*Op. cit.*

⁹Mark A. Pendleton, "Memories of Silver Reef," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, October, 1930, pp. 99-118, at p. 108.